1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

634 territory which he is called upon to rule to-day, the richest trade centre of the country, is inhabited to a very large extent by strangers, traders, craftsmen, and canoe-men from other parts of the country, many of them from Bida, that is, by people who reluctantly bow to the rule of a culturally 'inferior' peasant chief. It is not surprising, therefore, that his administration of the district proved unsatisfactory, and that the *Etsu* felt justified in urging the District Officer to reinstitute in this responsible office a member of his own class.

The District Heads live in their districts; they reside in the largest town and hold there their little court, an exact copy of a nobleman's household in the capital. They have to make frequent tours of inspection of their area, and at regular intervals they visit the capital to report to the *Etsu*, especially at the time of the great Mohammedan festivals when all officers of state assemble at the king's court. District Heads are sometimes transferred from one district to another, but the tendency to-day is to let them stay in one district as long as possible so as to become thoroughly familiar with the people and the local problems of administration. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their districts, their main task being the supervision of tax collection; but they are also charged with such non-political tasks as finding pupils for the elementary schools of the Emirate. Their subordinates in the administrative machinery are the various Village Heads of the district, of whom we have heard already.[1] The District Heads are further assisted in their work by a staff of official and semi-official helpers—scribes, messengers, policemen, and the host of *bara* and henchmen who attach themselves to every man of rank.

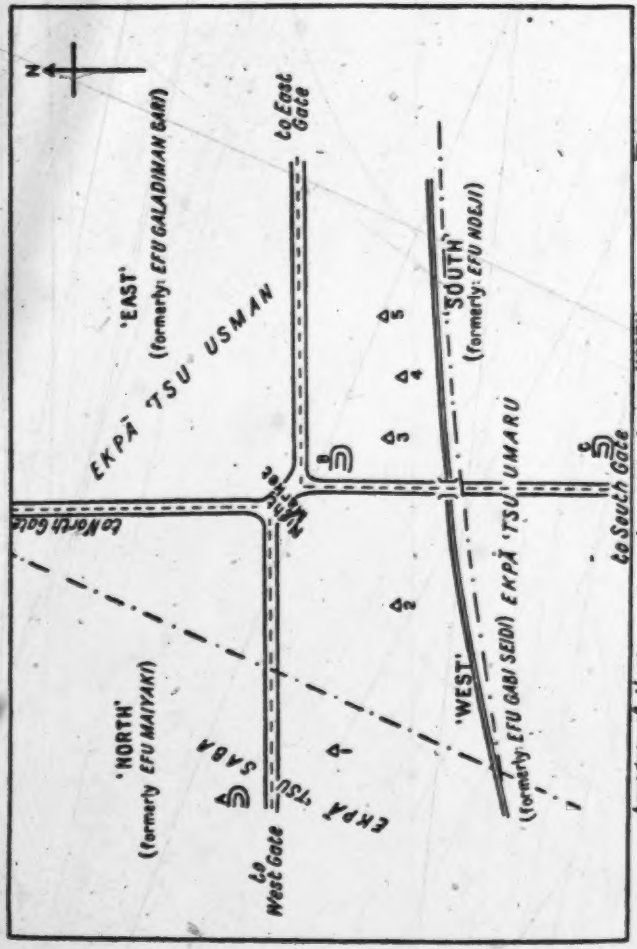
TOWN ADMINISTRATION

633 621 The administration of Bida town has undergone many changes in the thirty or forty years of British Administration. The original system was based to some extent on the division of the town into a number of 'wards', each associated with an influential member of the Bida nobility. The town was divided into twenty *efu* (or, as they were known officially, *ungwa*—the Hausa word for town ward); five of these wards were grouped together as one large *ungwa*, and these four *ungwa* were placed under four men of high rank: *Ndeji*, *Maiyaki*, *Galadiman Gari*, and *Gabi Seidi*. The four *ungwa* bore no relation to the dynastic division of Bida into three *ekpā*; their arrangement simply followed the four main roads which cross the town from north to south and east to west. However, the four rank-holders in charge of the large *ungwa* as well as the other subordinate ward-heads in the small *ungwa* (or *efu*) were actually living in the part of the town over which they had been placed; the link of locality which is so relevant in Nupe life was thus recognized officially. Later, however, this system of ward-heads lent itself to certain abuses, bribery and extortion of tax-money; it was abolished by the Administration and replaced by a new system which now divides the town into four

[1] See p. 52.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942

FF52 Nupe FF52



361
633

[p. 161]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

633 621 *ungwa* (the same four *ungwa*), defined geographically as Bida North, South, East, and West. Four new officials were appointed who are no longer inhabitants of 'their' *ungwa* but are supposed to be jointly responsible for the whole town, irrespective of their personal connexions with one or the other locality. The Hausa and Yoruba communities of Bida, who live in *ldlemi*, were placed under their own ward-heads. These six officials form the present Town Council. A royal prince, the *Natsu*, was appointed as its chairman, and at the same time as the representative of the *Etsu* on the Town Council. The attached sketch-map illustrates the changes in the town administration.

633 A certain inner weakness of this system becomes apparent at once. It lies in the disregard for the factor of locality and for those direct contacts and bonds of 'protection' and personal attachment which alone establish in Nupe a relationship of mutual confidence between the social classes, between ruler and ruled. It is not surprising therefore that the new division into four geographical areas 'did not work', and that in 1936, only three years after its introduction, a fundamental reorganization was contemplated.[1]

TAXATION

651 The taxation of the Emirate is fixed by the District Officer, who tours the country and, assisted by District Head and Village Head, assesses the income of the various villages and districts. The tax unit is the village area.[2] The distribution of the tax among the people of the village and its dependencies is left to the Village Head and his elders. Taxation varies partly from district to district and is also different in town and country. Complaints against too heavy taxation, or reports on defaulting, are forwarded through the District Head to the capital, that is, to the Emir's Council and the District Officer. Tax defaulters can be imprisoned.

Of the total tax revenue of the Emirate (to which are added fines, licence fees, &c.) 30 per cent. goes to the Central Government of Nigeria and 70 per cent. to the N.A. Treasury.[3] From the N.A. share in the revenue are paid the salaries of all (native) N.A. officials, the expenses of all Public Works for which the Emirate is responsible, the maintenance

[1] In a memorandum for the reorganization of the Bida Town Council, which I drew up on the request of the Administration, I have suggested (1) a town division based on the division into three *ekpā*, which is so eminently characteristic of the social life of the kingdom, and (2) a system of election of ward-heads by the people themselves. The latter would, in my view, utilize and render more valuable the channels of personal connexion between patron and client, trusted 'protector' and the ignorant, intimidated commoner who still feels that he could only benefit from the association with a man of rank and learning.—A paper on the same subject was published in abridged form in the *Summary of Lectures*, Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, 1937, pp. 97–8. See also p. 123.

[2] Lord Lugard, Colonial Reports Misc., No. 40.

[3] This scale corresponds to the position of Bida Emirate as a First Class Emirate. In 1935–6 the scale was slightly altered in favour of the N.A. share, because the building of the *Etsu*'s new official residence—a typical item of N.A. expenditure—would not have been possible without this additional revenue.

643 The ndaKó gboyá cult for
[754] the detection and killing of witches might not be performed in or near the town in which the *Etsu* was living, nor might anyone be put to death there. All these features, together with the ancient rule of inheritance whereby the first son born during his father's reign as *Etsu* became the heir, have disappeared, while a new background of respect for the memory of Mallam Dendo,[5] the first of the Fulani rulers of Nupe, has been created. What was once probably a divine kingship has been replaced by a system of rule by the militarily strong and the king has become *primus inter pares* among the hierarchy of rank holders.

643 The three dynasties stemming from Mallam Dendo to-day succeed to the throne
633 in strict rotation. The *Etsu* is the head of the reigning house, the *Shaba*[6] ("heir-presumptive") the head of the dynasty next in succession, and the *Kpotuŋ* the head of the third house. Bida town is divided into three sections (*eka*) each bearing the name of one of the royal dynasties and each having its own royal palace. The country around is similarly divided into three parts.

643 Every *Etsu* Nupe has sought during his reign to increase the power and wealth of his house. Former sources of income were the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade,[7] the control of the *ndakó gboyá* anti-witchcraft society, and profits from the royal estates and from the slave trade. To-day, apart from his salary, the *Etsu* receives only profits from the royal estates and from occasional trading.

Status and Titles[8]

565 There are marked status differences in Nupe society and many symbols of social
554 distinction, such as the wearing of an indigo-blue glazed turban by the nobility, ways of greeting equals and superiors, the giving of kola-nuts (the number and quality reflecting precisely the social status of the donor and recipient), and the right to go about on horseback. Families and lineages appear to fall into class divisions according to the status in the system of ranked titles ascribed to or achieved by some of their members. While each class is, in the main, a closed group, there are opportunities for promotion within the higher classes and also some inter-class nobility, whereby entry into the higher orders may be obtained through wealth, war service, marriage, or "clientship."[9] Social ascent is controlled and marked by the hierarchy of titles. Within a grade of titles promotion to a higher title entails a reshuffle among the holders of the lower titles.

565 Of the three classes, the first, *waci* or *gitsúži* (the royal nobility) consists of the descendants of Mallam Dendo in three royal houses, Usman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru, under their heads, *Etsu*, *Shaba*, and *Kpotuŋ*. This class is detached in origin and status from the rest of the community on account of the part it played in the wars and its position as royal fief-holders (*egba*)[10] in charge of large districts of the kingdom. The new king is elected from the *gitsúži*, every title-holder in which has in principle a chance of becoming king, though the royal prince who succeeds to the throne will generally have attained the rank of *Shaba*.[11] As well as the reshuffle of personnel holding the various titles which takes place on the death of a high title-holder and the subsequent appointment of his successor, there is a large-scale exchange of residences, younger brothers or sons moving into houses vacated by the death or promotion of their older brothers or fathers, for the residences of

[5] See above, p. 22.
[6] This office has been allowed to lapse since 1935 and the main functions have devolved upon the next in rank.
[7] i.e., the best kola-nuts grown at Labozhi.
[8] Nadel, 1942, pp. 93–103.
[9] See below, p. 35.
[10] See below, p. 36.
[11] Nadel states that only twice was a man who had not acquired the title of *Shaba* (or *Kpotuŋ* if the *Shaba* had died) made *Etsu*. Of the 41 royal titles held in 1936, 10 were held by Usman Zaki, 17 by Masaba, and 14 by Umaru, the ruling house at that time. See Nadel, 1942, pp. 95–7, for a detailed list of titles held by the various houses in 1936. Apparently new titles are often introduced.

631 countries of Beni and Kyedye; the third comprised a wider ring of remaining towns and districts of the kingdom, mostly in Trans-Kaduna; the fourth was Bida town, the seat of the central government, which formed an administrative district of its own.

The " outside " peoples consisted of Yoruba (Yagba and Bunu), Kakanda, Kamberi, Gbari, and Gbira, with some Nupe sections (mostly Dibo and Ebe). Their districts were not regularly administered by the central government, but they were recognized as being under the " protection " of Bida, and paid an annual tribute in slaves, collected by royal agents (*tuci* or *ajele*). Other Emirates and chieftainships were bound by " treaties " not to raid Bida's dependent territories, though Bida itself could raid its own " outside " peoples. The royal messengers visited the territories with small armies and the possession of such a force was an essential qualification for the post of *ajele*.

The kingdoms of Beni and Kyedye,[16] the two small " states within the State," were directly under the king and their chiefs acted as a kind of royal agents, their appointment and succession being subject to confirmation by the king. They could administer law in cases which came into the category of *gyara*, " reparation," and collected tax in their areas on the king's behalf.

The rest of the Nupe kingdom was divided into areas each containing a town with its dependent villages and *tunga*, which were administered as fiefs by their lords (*egba*). The latter might be members of the royal house or of the official nobility, or court slaves. Each received his fief from the *Etsu*, together with his title with which the fief remained permanently linked; the appointment to an *egba* post thus conferred a definite status. Fiefs were also bestowed on individuals, usually relatives or favourites of the king, independent of rank or office. A lord rarely visited his fief; his representative, usually one of his slaves or serfs living on his lands, collected tax for him. The *egba* had to give a proportion of this tax to the king. Among his other duties was the administration of justice in lesser cases.

633 Bida town was administered directly by the king and his officers of state, but, like the kingdom, was divided into areas, the inner city, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida lived, " greater " Bida, and the strangers' quarter. Cutting across these divisions were the small local units, described by Nadel as " factions rather than organized town wards," consisting of the followers of various members of the powerful nobility. In fact, the people of Bida refer to the different parts of the town by the titles of the nobility who have their houses there.

In more recent times the affairs of Bida Emirate have been in the hands of the *Etsu* and a council of four, consisting of the *Ndeji*, President (formerly " father of the town " of Bida), the *Maiyaki* or *Sarkin Yaki*, Minister of Public Works (formerly Commander in War), the *Nágya*, formerly District Head of Mokwa and a member of the nobility, and the *Etsu Tafiey*, official representative of the commoners and formerly chief of the Beni confederacy.[17] Other officials include the *Gabi Seidi*, formerly the *Etsu*'s chief slave and now the official messenger between the Emir's residence and the Divisional Office of the Nigerian Administration. Seven District Heads are appointed by the *Etsu* from the ranks of the higher royal nobility.
634 Exceptions are the *Kuta* of the Kyedye sub-tribe,[18] who is the District Head of Kuta District, and the *Sheshi* of Kacha. The District Heads live in the largest town of their District and make frequent tours of inspection of the area and regular visits to the *Etsu*. They are responsible to the *Etsu* for law and order in their District and for the collection of taxes.[19]

633 The *Dikko*, head of the nomadic Fulani (*bororoji*) in Bida Emirate, fills a
648 traditional position in Fulani social life and ceremonial. He acts as liaison officer

[16] See below, p. 38.
[17] c. 1936.
[18] See below, p. 38.
[19] Nadel, 1942, pp. 138–65.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

633 648 between the central administration and the Fulani, counts Fulani cattle and collects *jangali* (cattle tax).[20]

634 The Districts of Ilorin Province with a mixed Nupe and Yoruba population sometimes had two District Heads. When Sharagi District was placed in Ilorin Emirate (*c.* 1913) the Nupe chief (*Ndakpoto*) was made District Head, though he is said to have had no control over the people as a whole. The Igbona Yoruba head (*Olupo*) is said to have been effective among the Yoruba. The District Heads of Lafiagi and Pategi are called *Rani*, that of Kupa *Makun*, of Kakanda *Aganshu*, and of Shaku *Kpotuŋ*.[21]

Village Organization

621 Every Nupe village constitutes a separate political entity, each with its own head (*žitsu*) who " owns " the village, controls its main resources and the lives of its inhabitants, and often assumes its name. In Jebba and Mokwa the position of head is filled by the promotion of one of the senior elders of the village. Elsewhere it is hereditary in one house (*emi*). In either case the appointment has to be confirmed by the *Etsu* Nupe. The interregnum before the appointment of the new head is filled by a high ranking elder, *ndeji*, " father of the town." Some villages have heads officially appointed by the administration who are distinct from the traditional heads, called *Etsu nyenkpa* (" money," i.e., tax, " chief ") as opposed to *žitsu*, " town chief " In some riverain villages, e.g., Funga, Nantu, Batachi, Edogi, and Badeggi, the village head is called *gago*, a title said to be used by Hausa speakers.[22]

622 The Basa-Nge of Igala Division are divided into 14 inland and riverain units under a village headman responsible to the *anaja* (?District Head). These headmen are chosen by the elders of each unit, but their appointment is subject to the approval of the *Ata* Gala, from whom many of them hold titles and beads of office.[23]

The village head is responsible for the appointment of the village elders from the ranks of the family heads, the control and apportionment of land, and the enforcement of fishing rights. He organizes and partly finances certain religious rites linked with chiefship, though he is not regarded as the religious head of the community. He arbitrates in disputes and has certain limited and informal judicial powers; he also organizes any concerted action of the community or large-scale work such as road-making. Formerly he had special prerogatives and still receives annual gifts in kind in some small villages.

623 The village head is assisted by a council of elders (*ŋusaži* sing. *ŋusa*, the " old ones," or *ticiži*, the " titled ones ") who act as mouthpieces, agents, and informants of the chief. They are the heads of families or groups of families who live together in one ward (*efu*). Their titles are conferred on them by the chief, some titles reflecting the occupation followed by the elder and his family. The position of an elder as head of a specific group is recognized by the community, as is the division of the affairs of the village between a number of elders.

624 In villages where the headship is hereditary, important priestly offices are not usually identified with political office, the office of village priest (*žigi*) being kept in the junior branch of the house. *Žitsu* and *žigi*, " town chief " and " town priest," often appear in genealogies as elder and younger brother in the classificatory sense. In those villages where the head is elected from the senior title-holders, religious ceremonies are performed by the elder who is entrusted with the rule of the village during an interregnum and whose office is hereditary, so that instead of there being a hereditary chief there is, as it were, a hereditary " king-maker."

[20] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.
[21] Biscoe, 1918; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934.
[22] Rochfort Rae, 1921; Notes on Kakanda District, 1934. The title *gago* is also found in the Kamberi areas north of the Nupe country. Mathews (1926) says that it is generally used by Hausa speakers to mean village head. In Bargery's Hausa dictionary the meaning is given as ' a pagan chief.'
[23] Hopkins, 1934.

623 The full council of elders is summoned only on important occasions. The normal routine of village government is carried on by an inner council, consisting of two or three elders of the highest rank who meet informally at the village head's house.

Succession to the highest titles may, like the headship, be either hereditary or by promotion; but succession to the lower titles is nearly always hereditary.[24]

The Political System of the Kyedye

634 184 The government of the Kyedye sub-tribe is centralized from Muregi and is the monopoly of a selected and privileged body consisting of the Kyedye chief (*Kuta*, also called *Etsu Nya Nuwa*, "the king of the water") and his titled councillors. The *Kuta* has always been subordinate to the *Etsu* Nupe, but, although the district is now administered centrally from Bida in the same way as other districts in the Emirate, no attempt has ever been made to displace the hereditary rulers.

The office of *Kuta* is hereditary in two of the three chiefly lineages, these two being the "founders" and claiming a common ancestor. The rules of succession are not rigid, however, since the wishes of the *Etsu* Nupe, the title-holders, and the people, and administrative ability are also considered. The *Kuta* appears in public with impressive ceremonial and travels in a state canoe which must never be entered by a woman and must never touch the bank. His authority derives from the tradition that the first *Kuta* was invested by Tsoede, his strong economic position, and the fact that most of the important political offices are allotted to his kinsmen. The heir-apparent is known as the *Egba*; the post is held by the most senior of the *Kuta*'s relatives.

The offices of state fall into two categories: first the *ticiži*, title-holders and councillors, with five offices, four of them hereditary; second the *egbaži*, who are delegates in charge of settlements and colonies. There are many grades of *egbaži*, following a strict system of precedence and promotion. Succession in most cases is not automatic but goes to the most suitable candidate of sufficient seniority. In the early days, three title-holders acted as the *Kuta*'s district heads. Each was allotted a section of the river and was formerly allowed to levy tolls on river traffic. To-day these title-holders have no executive power, though they are still accorded respect, and village heads deal directly through the *Kuta*. There are also "household" titles, mainly in Muregi town, bestowed by the *Kuta* upon his followers.

The *Kuta* had at one time a council of state with advisors, though in effect he was an absolute ruler responsible only to the *Etsu* Nupe. In 1945 a district council was formed, consisting of the *Kuta*, *Alhalin* Muregi, village head Muregi, *Tsado Kuta*, *Liman Kuta*, district scribe, and Muregi school mallam. Meetings are not held regularly, but only when matters of importance need to be discussed.[25]

Organization of Kutigi town (Beni sub-tribe)

● 633 Kutigi town comprises four originally independent groups: the *Kintsóži*, "owners of the country," the original inhabitants under their head (*Ižitsu*) who was formerly town chief; the *Ndaceži* (hunters), aboriginal Nupe but from another village; the *Kónu* (prisoners of war), freed slaves of Yoruba (Yagba) origin, occupied in weaving and indigo-dyeing; *Benú*, the largest group, providing the tribal name, but of alien origin, having arrived in the country from Bornu about 1800. The *Benú* gained political supremacy over the other sections and became the recognized rulers of Kutigi and the neighbouring villages. They are Moslems, wealthy traders and owners of horses and cattle.[26]

[24] Nadel, 1942, pp. 50–8.
[25] Nadel, 1942, pp. 24–5; 1940a, pp. 174–81; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[26] Nadel, 1938.